

ALL FOR ONE

Collaboration in the crop sector is key to success

Alberta Barley works with the Alberta Canola Producers Commission (ACPC), the Alberta Pulse Growers Commission (APG) and the Alberta Wheat Commission (AWC) on a regular basis to better serve Alberta's producers.

Alberta Barley chairman Mike Ammeter said he believes working together is the best strategy for crop commissions and their members to effect change.

"Although we do have our individual issues that are unique to each crop, at the end of the day most Alberta farmers probably grow some of them, if not all of them," Ammeter said.

"Let's all be a little island and do our own thing? That's not productive."

Here are some of our current collaborative projects:

Alberta Farm Sustainability Extension Working Group

Recently, the four major crop commissions joined together to create the Alberta Farm Sustainability Extension Working Group (AFSE), represented by extension co-ordinator Jolene Noble of Manning, AB.

"We are trying to raise awareness about international sustainable sourcing standards, and see where Alberta is in terms of sustainability," Noble said. The first step AFSE took was to commission Ipsos to conduct a telephone survey of approximately 400 crop producers in Alberta.

The survey follows the 2015 Sustainability Certification Pilot, which assessed 32 farmer directors and their ability to meet four international agri-



Team Alberta and the Grain Growers of Canada met with important stakeholders in April 2016.

culture sustainability standards.

"Sustainability is not just about the environment. There are three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economical," Noble said. "We are continuously looking to improve on all fronts. It's important for the farmers' future, the next generation, and for Alberta's agricultural future."

Regional meetings

Each year, the crop commissions host regional meetings around the province. These meetings are intended to update producers on the status of each commission, as well as draw in new members and hold elections.

Collaborating on regional meetings means more than saving money. While most of Alberta's producers grow some or all of the top four crops, taking the time to attend four different meetings just isn't feasible. By working together and giving farmers the chance to attend two or three meetings at once, these collaborations benefit all of Alberta's crop producers.

Team Alberta

Starting in the 2014/15 crop year, Alberta Barley, ACPC, APG and AWC have joined together as Team Alberta. This group, designed to collaborate on policy issues affecting Alberta's

producers, began by travelling to Ottawa, ON, to meet with politicians and industry stakeholders.

Team Alberta has now become a year-round collaboration effort, and sends out a quarterly newsletter to parliamentarians to continue communications on behalf of the province's growers.

In April 2016, Team Alberta joined the Grain Growers of Canada on a policy mission to Ottawa. Transportation and trade were the topics at the top of the discussion list. With the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement talks in full swing, identifying trading partners and determining how to get Canadian crops from point A to point B have become important agriculture policy topics.

"We quite often ended up back on transportation because, as I would often say, we can have all these trade agreements, but if I can't get my production out of the country to meet market demand, the trade agreement doesn't matter," Ammeter said.

Following the Team Alberta trip, Minister of Transport Marc Garneau announced an extension of provisions within the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, a move celebrated by the crop commissions and Alberta producers.



ALBERTA BARLEY ELECTIONS 101

Are you interested in joining Alberta Barley but don't know where to get started? The following is a breakdown of the Alberta Barley roles and election process.

Only eligible producers—those who have grown and sold barley to a licensed dealer in one of the last three crop years—can be nominated to join Alberta Barley as a director, director-at-large or delegate.

Directors

Alberta Barley directors work as a board to determine and set the strategic direction of the organization.

To run for a director position in their region, eligible producers must gather 10 signatures from other eligible producers in their region. Once nomi-

inated, nominees must give written consent to accept their nomination.

Once elected, a director is eligible to serve two back-to-back, three-year terms.

Director-at-large

In addition to the six director positions, Alberta Barley's board of directors includes three director-at-large positions. These directors work to represent the province's barley farmers as a whole.

In order to be nominated for a director-at-large position, an eligible producer must also collect 10 signatures from eligible producers in Alberta; nominations in this case are not specific to the region in which the nominee operates.

Delegate

Delegates work with their regional director to form a committee that informs the Alberta Barley board of directors about regional issues and opportunities. Delegates are able to sit on Alber-

ta Barley committees, such as research, policy and market development.

Unlike director positions, delegates are nominated from the floor during a regional meeting. Delegate terms last two years.

Elections 101

Once nominated, director and delegate nominees attend their local regional meeting. If there are more nominees than available positions, eligible producers at the meeting vote to determine the producer for the role.

If a position becomes vacant, eligible producers can be nominated and elected into empty positions during Alberta Barley's annual general meeting. The Alberta Agricultural Products Marketing Council can also appoint directors on the basis of a recommendation from the board of directors at any time.

For more information or nomination forms, visit albertabarley.com or call 1-800-265-9111.

 **Alberta Barley**
25TH ANNIVERSARY

*Save
The
Date*

2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
December 7–8, 2016
Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel

CELEBRATING
25
YEARS

2016 director and delegate openings

Region 1

Three delegate positions open

Region 2

Seven delegate positions open

Region 3

One director position open

Region 4

One director position open and four delegate positions open

Region 5

Two delegate positions open

Region 6

One delegate position open

One director-at-large position is open and can be nominated from regions 1, 2, 3 or 6.

The deadline for applications is 4 p.m. on Oct. 31, 2016.

REGION MAP



An interactive version of the region map is available at
albertabarley.com/regionmap

ALBERTA'S PRODUCERS GIVEN MORE TIME TO RAISE RAIL TRANSPORT POLICY CONCERNS

By Ellen Cottee

Government policy can have a serious impact on Alberta's producers, and few policy concerns are more important and contentious than transportation.

Introduced in the 2013/14 crop year, the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act (Bill C-30) was a response to a serious grain transportation backlog that developed over the crop season. Containing both temporary and permanent provisions, Bill C-30 ensured rail service levels were maintained to clear up the backlog.

These provisions included holding rail companies responsible for failing to ship grain at a minimum volume set by the Government of Canada and for expanding interswitching limits, leading to more competition and flexibility.

However, the temporary provisions were set to expire July 31, 2016. Many producers saw this as a serious problem, as Bill C-30 was widely regarded as a step toward improved railway service—an ongoing concern for Canadian grain farmers.

In April 2016, Minister of Transport Marc Garneau announced that provisions within Bill C-30—namely rail interswitching and grain movement minimums—would be extended for another year. The extension of these



With the extension of provisions within the Fair Rail for Grain Farmers Act, Alberta's crop commissions have more time to consult with stakeholders on transportation policy.

provisions gives producers "a little breathing room," according to Alberta Barley chairman Mike Ammeter.

"It gives us a bigger window to try and work on some of the issues," Ammeter said. "In my view, regardless of what they say about competition, we don't really have competition. It's a duopoly."

Grain farmers in Canada have two options when it comes to shipping their grain by rail: Canadian Pacific Railway (CP Rail) or Canadian National Railway (CN Rail). Most farming communities in Canada have only one realistic option for shipping the majority of their grain.

The announcement to extend provisions came one week after Team Alberta sat down with representatives from the Ministry of Transport to discuss Alberta's crop-specific concerns.

"I think our Team Alberta outreach initiative was incredibly timely, but was only in part responsible for the result," said Shannon Sereda, market development and policy manager for Alberta Barley. "Having a physical presence at this time was fortunate, but presenting a strong, collective message that is shared by all stakeholders was key in collaboratively extending the provision."

Team Alberta has already enacted a plan of action for the upcoming year.

"We have already reached out to both of the ministers of agriculture and transportation to express the need for consultation with the grain industry," Sereda said.

"We will continue to engage with both the provincial and federal government and push for long-term solutions that are backed by legislation."

MEET THE STAFF



Shannon Sereda
Market Development and
Policy Manager

Shannon Sereda joined the Alberta Barley team as market development and policy manager in January 2016. Shannon holds a bachelor's degree in management and a M.Sc. related to sustainability. Formerly a commercial officer with Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, as well as a trade commissioner with the Embassy of Canada in Quito, Ecuador, Shannon's experience is an asset to Alberta Barley.

While her grandparents were third-generation farmers in the Peace Country, working with Alberta Barley has provided Shannon with her first in-depth introduction to the business of agriculture.

"I am immensely enjoying the agricultural sector and find it dynamic, challenging and different every day," she said.

Being involved in both policy and market development is particularly rewarding, she said. "The synergies that exist between the two roles give me a good understanding of the many sides of an issue or opportunity."

Outside of work, she balances her life as mom to five-year-old Jax with her love of gardening and mountain sports.